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step 96. At step 96, an indication of the copy protection, and the level of the copy protection, is provided. Such an indication is provided to the CPU of a computer as well as other computer elements.

FIG. 7 illustrates a logic diagram that may be used to detect the presence of copy protection and/or use restrictions of a received data stream. The process begins at step 100 where data is received as audio and/or video data. Having received the data the process proceeds to step 102 where the data is interpreted to determine whether a data access parameter of the data is active. If not, the process proceeds to step 104 where no restrictions are imposed on the use and/or copying of the data.

If, however, the data access parameter is active, the process proceeds to step 106. At step 106, an indication of protection regarding the data is provided to components of a computer system. Having done this, the process proceeds to step 108 where the data is processed by at least one of the computer components based on the indication of protection.

The preceding discussion has presented a method and apparatus for detecting the presence of copy protection in a data stream. Upon detection of the protection information, the information is utilized by a computer system to prevent the unauthorized copying of copyrighted audio and/or video data. By the inclusion of the present invention in a computer system, it may receive video data from a DVD player and provide the level of protection the content providers are demanding.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for a computing system to provide protection of incoming data, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving, by a video decoder of the computing system, data of at least one of analog audio data and analog video data, wherein a line of the data includes screen end information, a data access parameter, color burst information, and at least one of audio and video data and wherein the data access parameter is independent of a source of the data;

digitizing, by the video decoder independent of the data access parameter, the at least one of audio and video data to produce digital video, wherein, once the at least one of audio and video data is digitized, the data access parameter is lost;

prior to enabling a central processing unit to access the digital video, determining by a graphics controller whether the data access parameter restricts accessing of the digital video; and

when the data access parameter restricts accessing of the digital video, preventing the central processing unit from accessing the digital video without restriction.

2. The method of 1 further comprises, within step (a), receiving the data from at least one of: a digital video disc driver within the computing system, a video cassette recorder, and a video transmission source.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the data access parameter comprises at least one of: copy restrictions and parental control.

4. A video decoder system comprising:

a processing circuit; and

memory that stores programming instructions that, when read by the processing circuit, causes the processing circuit to:

cause a video decoder of a computing system to receive data of at least one of analog audio data and analog video data, wherein a line of the data includes screen

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end information, a data access parameter, color burst information, and at least one of audio and video data and wherein the data access parameter is independent of a source of the data;

digitizing, independent of the data access parameter, at least one of audio and video data to produce a digital signal, wherein once the at least one of audio and video data is digitized, the data access parameter is lost;

prior to enabling a central processing unit to access the digital signal, determine whether the data access parameter restricts accessing of the digital signal; and when the data access parameter restricts accessing of the digital signal, prevent the central processing unit from accessing the digital signal without restriction.

5. The video decoder of claim 14, wherein the memory further comprises programming instructions that, when read by the processing circuit, causes the processing circuit to receive the data from at least one of: a digital video disc driver within the computing system, a video cassette recorder, and a video transmission source.

6. The system of claim 4, wherein the accessing performed by the central processing unit further comprises copying the digital signal.

7. The system of claim 4, wherein the accessing performed by the central processing unit further comprises providing the digital signal to a display device.

8. The system of claim 4, wherein the digital signal further comprises audio and/or video data.

9. The system of claim 4, wherein the data access parameter includes copy restriction information.

10. A digital storage medium that stores programming instructions that, when read by a processing device, causes the processing device to detect protection of at least one of audio and video, the digital storage medium comprises:

first storage means for storing programming instructions that, when read by the processing device, causes the processing device to cause a video decoder of a computing system to receive data of at least one of analog audio data and analog video data, wherein a line of the data includes screen end information, a data access parameter, color burst information, and at least one of audio and video data and wherein the data access parameter is independent of a source of the data;

second storage means for storing programming instructions that, when read by the processing device, causes the processing device to digitize, independent of the data access parameter, the at least one of audio and video data to produce digital video, wherein, once the at least one of audio and video data is digitized, the data access parameter is lost;

third storage means for storing programming instructions that, when read by the processing device, causes the processing device to contemporaneous with the digitizing and prior to enabling a central processing unit to access the digital video, determine whether the data access parameter restricts accessing of the digital video; and

fourth storage means for storing programming instructions that, when read by the processing device, causes the processing device to, when the data access parameter restricts accessing of the digital video, prevent the central processing unit from accessing the digital video without restriction.

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